Distribution of Scholars' Prizes by Lord Shaftesbury at Exeter Hall.

THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION

QUARTERLY RECORD.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"THE RAGGED SCHOOL UNION MAGAZINE."

Ye wise and learned men,
Who, taught by tongue and pen,
In college halls much learning found—
Think of the ignorant around:
Teach in the Ragged School.

Ye merchants of our isle,
Enrich'd by prosperous toil,
Feel for the half-clad shivering race,
Whose heads oft find no resting-place:
Give to the Ragged School.

Ye lords of noble line,
Whose names and talents shine,
Be ye rich capitals to grace
These columns of our rising race,
Shap'd in the Ragged School.

Ye fair and gentle dames,
Whose beauty influence claims,
Extend that influence around,
Friends of these wretched ones be found:
Speak for the Ragged School.

"Lord of all power and might,"
Who, in Thy followers' sight,
Young children in Thine arms didst take,
And bless them—for Thy mercy's sake,
Smile on the Ragged School.

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PREFACE—REVIEW.

In the order of God's good providence, we are permitted to complete another volume of Records of Christian efforts for the amelioration of the condition of the very poor of London—physical, social, spiritual. The work done has been very much upon the old lines, very little has been added to excite the curious or to arouse surprise, and progress has been made upon a satisfactory footing.

Very little has been done in the way of domestic legislation. Fearful wars in foreign lands have drawn off the attention of the public and of Parliament. But on the 3rd July last an Act was passed to legalize and facilitate the working of *Retreats for Inebriates*. This Act is to be in force for ten years, and is to come into operation at the close of the current year. Habitual drunkards may be remitted by a magistrate, or may be admitted on their own application, and are to be legally detained for a term not, compulsorily, longer than twelve months. We anticipate from this semi-voluntary confinement and abstinence great benefits, for the abuse of the use of strong drinks is one of the greatest curses inherited by our youthful people.

A piece of legislation was attempted, but fortunately failed, the object of which was to levy a tax on charities. On withdrawing it, the Chancellor of the Exchequer intimated an intention to renew it next session. The proposition was to charge threepence in the pound on the receipts of the charities towards the expenses incurred by the Charity Commissioners. The injustice is seen by making all charities pay, while only a few, and a very few, of them would in any degree be benefited by anything done by the Commissioners.

The year, upon the last quarter of which we have now entered, is to witness the third triennial election of the School Board for London. The present Board has been charged with extravagance and waste of the ratepayers' money. The complaint has come from all parts of the metropolis, and has forced itself upon the attention of the House of Commons, where it was stated the remedy was in the hands of the ratepayers, who at the coming election would have the opportunity to elect other men who would promise by wise and careful arrangements to have for every sovereign spent its value in service or material. It is to be hoped that the revulsion caused by the reckless expenditure in the past will not in the future be followed by a cheeseparing policy.

There can be no doubt that the Board Schools have given a great impetus to the spread of education both in its area and its depth. It has now been long enough at work to enable some of us to compare the working, the costs, and the results of elementary schools of the present decade with those preceding it. There are those still at work in the school field who were cultivating it in the first half of the present century. The venerable Thomas Ryder, the present manager of the Calthorpe School, was conducting the large school at Hanley, Staffordshire, as far back as 1831. We in 1834 were in charge of important schools in the same county, and made his acquaintance. Our helper, Mr. Curtis, too, was soon after in the work, and our friend John Leyland, of Wandsworth and Byfleet, was then beginning his useful career, first among infants, and after among criminals and neglected boys. Others also are worthy of honourable mention, but their numbers are becoming painfully few. It is to such as these that our present artisans and working classes are indebted for the degree of education they possess. The work done by these teachers, when compared with those of the present day, seems simply marvellous. Then was provided one room, the size recommended was 60 feet by 30 feet, fitted with parallel desks for writing, and wide marginal spaces for classes round the room for the accommodation of 300 children. This large number was taught by one master or mistress, whose remuneration was the twopence paid weekly by each child. The teachers, besides the teaching, had to look up and account for all absentees, as well as to superintend the daily and weekly cleaning of the place. How different now, with every possible appliance that money can command and skill produce in the buildings, and a teacher for every class of thirty children, with caretakers to look after the cleaning of the buildings, and visitors specially appointed to fill the schools, and to see that the absentees are kept to a minimum! The difference between the two systems is understood and appreciated by only a few, even, of our philanthropists; it was therefore refreshing to read the remarks of the First Lord of the Admiralty, at a meeting at Henley-on-Thames, when he said:—"The educational work which had been done up to the year 1870 was a work which reflected the highest possible credit on all those who were concerned in it; and, for his own part, he confessed that he attached far more importance to the work which was done prior to that year—which was done as a work of love,—than he did to work which was the result of orders emanating from a central authority and under directions carried out by the machinery of local government. We owed a deep debt of gratitude to those who concerned themselves about the education of the people prior to 1870, and even now we owed much to those who charged themselves—regarding it as a religious duty—with the care and concern of the education of the youth of the country. His belief was that work done in that way—done in the spirit of love, benevolence, and from a sense of high religious duty—was work which in all probability was far better done, and would, by the blessing of God, be followed by far better results than work done simply by order of the central authority, and as the results of the direction of the Government."

The Government had under consideration the Gordian knot of religious education in elementary schools, they could not untie it, and feared to cut it; they therefore transferred it to the School Board for a solution of the difficulty, and the country is indebted to Mr. W. H. Smith, M.P., for that solution, for it was this gentleman, as a member of the School Board for London, that caused the Bible to be introduced into all the Board schools of London.

1, Exeter Hall, London,
October, 1879.

Editor, J. G. G.

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